

VZCZCXYZ0000  
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHAM #3209/01 2111358  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 301358Z JUL 07  
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9673

UNCLAS AMMAN 003209

SIPDIS

SIPDIS  
SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [KDEM](#) [KMPI](#) [KPAO](#) [SCUL](#) [PGOV](#) [XF](#) [JO](#)  
SUBJECT: ADVANCING THE FREEDOM AGENDA IN JORDAN

REF: A. AMMAN 2985

[B](#). AMMAN 2908  
[C](#). STATE 88465

[1](#). (U) Summary. Embassy Amman consistently advances the freedom agenda in Jordan through: frequent interaction with and support of civil society; engagement with the media; and a multitude of USAID, MEPI and Embassy-sponsored programming. Civil society leaders, democracy promoters and human rights advocates regularly attend Embassy functions and frequently contribute to Embassy reporting. The Ambassador and other Embassy officers take advantage of the mission's close contact with Jordanian government officials to promote reform and engage the media and Jordanian public to promulgate the vision presented in the President's June 5 Prague speech. End summary.

[2](#). (U) This year, the Ambassador broke tradition and hosted a unique Independence Day celebration on July 4 at his residence. Eschewing the Embassy's regular list of host government, diplomatic and business leaders, the Embassy invited 800 young Jordanian leaders representing the reform agenda: civil society figures, student leaders, youth movements, and NGOs. During his public address the Ambassador remarked that "Jordan . . . is becoming more open, with more voices participating in political, economic and cultural life. Among the most important new voices in Jordan are the voices of its youth."

[3](#). (U) The Ambassador published an op-ed entitled "Celebrating Freedom Throughout the World" in three of the four largest Jordanian newspapers on July 4 and 5 - drawing heavily from the President's Prague speech and emphasizing the fundamental elements shared by democracies and the universality of all peoples' yearning for freedom.

[4](#). (SBU) Ambassador met with representatives of civil society on July 3 at his residence to discuss the freedom agenda and assess their views on progress and impediments to reform in Jordan (ref b). Activists reported their concerns about the pace of reform and the Ambassador underscored Post's commitment to frequent, regular contacts with activists to keep apprised of developments to civil society.

[5](#). (SBU) Human rights activists and civil society leaders are frequent guests at Embassy functions - the Ambassador's June 5 reception for the outgoing and incoming political counselors being a recent example. Additionally, the political section hosted a luncheon on June 20 and will host a follow-on lunch August 12 to further explore human rights issues with leading Jordanian activists. Post's human rights officer meets monthly with counterparts from European embassies interested in human rights promotion.

[6](#). (U) As part of PA-organized and USAID-funded legislative strengthening program, the Ambassador received 12 Jordanian parliamentarians for tea on February 19 following their

two-week November visit to the U.S., and used the opportunity to highlight the importance of legislative checks on the executive branch. In his remarks, he encouraged the MPs to become more involved in their own budgeting processes.

¶17. (U) Over the course of the past year, the Ambassador delivered a number of public remarks to an array of civil society groups promoting the freedom agenda. For example, on February 20, the Ambassador delivered the opening address to the International Republican Institute-organized regional Women's Democracy Network meeting held in Amman. On February 6, he spoke with Jordanian civil society organizations at the MEPI-funded Private/Public Partnership Conference at the Dead Sea. On May 15, the Ambassador participated in a panel during the International Women's Forum's annual meeting in Amman, where he trumpeted USG support for democracy programming and reform efforts in Jordan to an audience of over 500 global women leaders. The Ambassador also regularly meets with university students, and hosts media roundtables with local journalists, providing the opportunity to promote the Freedom Agenda through open dialogue.

¶18. (U) On June 29, acting PolCouns met with Human Rights Watch during their annual meeting held in Amman, engaging this well-respected international NGO on the pace of reform in Jordan.

¶19. (U) USAID's Democracy and Governance program supports a number of Freedom Agenda components. For instance, sub-grants under its rule of law project funded the Adalah Center for Human Rights to train judges and journalists on balanced media coverage of court proceedings; the Noor Al Hussein Foundation introduces students to human rights and rule of law issues; and the Al Hayat Center for Civil Society Development targets Jordanian universities to enhance awareness of and respect for human rights and the rule of law.

¶10. (U) In May and June, Freedom House, a USAID implementing partner:

- collaborated with the Jordanian National Commission for Women to conduct workshops in Amman, Aqaba and Irbid, attended by 111 members of civil society, that resulted in a consensus on the need for advocacy on five specific laws affecting women.

- issued sub-grants to three civil society organizations to education young and rural Jordanians on participation in civil society and parliamentary affairs.

- signed an agreement with a community-based organization in the northern Badia region to develop a legal literacy program that employs a rights-based approach to women's rights and targets women in rural communities.

¶11. (U) Through its media implementer IREX, USAID has supported the following outreach activities to empower Jordanian civil society, universities and media organizations:

- convened a meeting of ten editors and media professors from public and private universities to discuss strategies to upgrade journalism criteria to reflect practical skills;

- sent two academics to the University of Pennsylvania Annenberg School of Communications to prepare papers on media law and community media in Jordan that will be used in law courses to build a knowledge base on the principles of international media law and help NGOs advocate for establishing community broadcasters in Jordan;

- delivered a two-week course on media law and policy that was attended by 150 Jordanian students, journalists and professionals; and

- collaborated with UNESCO to sponsor a symposium on press freedom in Jordan on World Press Freedom Day that was attended by approximately 80 persons and widely publicized.

¶12. (U) USAID's legislative strengthening implementer, the State University of New York (SUNY), supported a parliamentary staff fellowship for Amjad Al-Fayez, who returned to be named head of the Civil Society Organizations Unit in the Lower House of the Jordanian Parliament.

¶13. (U) A coalition of USAID implementers (SUNY and NDI), local NGO partners, and the Jordanian Parliament's Directorate of External Relations produced the first-ever Parliamentary-Civil Society Networking Fair on May 28. During the event, a dozen legislators mingled with 50 representatives of civic groups and the Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Dr. Nayef al-Fayez, to address a diverse group of rights-focused organizations, political parties, think tanks, study groups, and NGOs.

#### MEPI Programming

-----

¶14. (U) Jordan remains a welcoming environment and therefore frequently hosts regional MEPI meetings, conferences, projects. Recently Jordan hosted a Young Minds for Action meeting July 19-21 at the Dead Sea to explore women's issues, youth, and technology; the American Bar Association/Arab Women's Legal Network held its third general meeting in Amman June 13-15; the Foundation for Civil Society Law Reform in the Gulf region organized its regional conference June 18-19; and MEPI and the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office sponsored an intellectual property workshop in Amman on June 13.

¶15. (U) In its July edition, Jordan Business published a two-page feature article on the Department-sponsored regional Women Business Leaders' Summit held in Amman in February. The magazine prominently featured an interview on the valuable partnership between Jumana Twal, founder of a highly successful Jordanian public relations firm, and her Madison Avenue counterpart.

#### Elections Support

-----

¶16. (U) USAID and MEPI support significant elections programming in gearing up for this year's municipal and parliamentary elections. NDI partnered with Al Hayat Center for Civil Society Development to organize youth civic education camps for over 600 participants, to bring them together for direct discussions with candidates. IRI has worked with local partner NGOs outside of Amman to train over 600 potential male and female candidates for the upcoming municipal and parliamentary elections. MEPI supported the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies' mentoring program for seven female Jordanian candidates to participate in municipal and parliamentary elections.

¶17. (SBU) The Ambassador personally engaged the Ministers of Interior and Municipal Affairs on July 3 to secure access for Embassy officers planned visits to polling centers through Jordan during the July 31 municipal elections (ref a).

#### Foundation for the Future

-----

¶18. (SBU) Amman currently houses the Foundation for the Future, a product of the partnership between the G-8, BMENA, and the Forum for the Future. On July 18, Francesco Rosa, the Chief Operating Officer of the Foundation, told Emboff that he expects a Chief Financial Officer to start work soon and plans to hire two program officers by the end of 2007. Rosa reported that the Foundation's acting executive president and chairman of the board Anwar Ibrahim will visit Amman on August 2 to meet Jordanian Foreign Minister Al-Khatib. Additionally, Rosa is drafting an MOU between the Foundation and Jordan's MFA to resolve outstanding financial issues and define the Foundation's tax-exempt status. To date, the Foundation has awarded five grants and expects to announce additional grants following its November board meeting in Paris. On average, it receives one to two grant

applications per week.

Visit Amman's Classified Web Site at  
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/amman/>  
Hale